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# ATARI

## Applying The Atari

by Jeff Brenner

Hello 1985! 1984 brought some more rough times to Atari. First there was the realization that profits were gone for good. Then there was Atari's typical management confusion followed by massive layoffs and more layoffs. Later in the year, Jack Tramiel, the former president of Commodore who killed Atari in the first place, bought the company with its multi-million dollar debt from Warner Communications. In his efforts to consolidate Atari, more layoffs were made and Atari divisions around the country were shut down. Even Atari's famed toll-free telephone number was eliminated. Then we witnessed more layoffs and still more layoffs. By the end of the year, I would guess that Atari employed maybe five workers, a telephone operator and 150 lawyers.

Atari has told us that they'll be bringing out new 16-bit and 32-bit machines with incredibly low prices this year. Well, I can't even be 100% certain that Atari will still exist by the time you read this. Let's think positively, though, and hope that Atari will be able to change things around in 1985.

Last month we concluded with Program Perfect, a routine to prevent typing errors in programs entered from this column. This month we'll learn how to use Program Perfect and we'll test it on a program dedicated to the new year. Before we do that, let's take a look at the reader mail and some new books.

### Reader Mail

There are two errors in the first ATARI disk directory program (August). First, the line, 6 IF FILE\$(5,16) = "FREE" THEN 8, blows up with an ERROR message! It should be IF FILE\$(5,8) = "FREE." Second, the DIM FILE\$(15) is too short and you lose the size of files in sector count. I would suggest DIM FILE\$(99).

Tom Snow

W. Lafayette, Indiana

You're absolutely right, and I apologize for the error. As

you suggest, line 6 could be changed to:

```
IF FILE$(5,8) = "FREE"
  THEN 8
```

However, this will cause the program to stop if it happens to encounter a file name such as "AZFREEZE.BAS." The line should have read:

```
IF FILE$(5,16) = "FREE
SECTORS" THEN 8
```

The "SECTORS" was omitted.

You're also correct in stating that FILE\$ is not dimensioned at a large enough value. It should have been dimensioned at 17 for proper operation. Any larger value, such as 99, will work as well. Following is the complete corrected routine:

```
1 REM DIRECTORY
PROGRAM
2 DIM FILE$(17)
3 OPEN #1,6,0,"D:*.**"
4 INPUT #1:FILE$
5 PRINT FILE$
6 IF FILE$(5,16) = "FREE
SECTORS" THEN 8
7 GOTO 4
8 CLOSE #1:END
```

Those of you with DOS III should change line 6 to:

```
6 IF FILE$(5,15) = "FREE
BLOCKS" THEN 8
```

since this DOS works with blocks instead of sectors.

I am using the Atari assembler-editor cartridge and want to combine two source files I have created separately. When I use ENTER, it loads in the second file, but erases the first. Any ideas?

A. Robinson

New York, New York

Yes. In BASIC, the ENTER command will merge a program with the program residing in memory. When using the assembler/editor, you must tack on a ".M" for merging files. For example, to merge SOURCE.ASM with a source code already in memory, use:

ENTER #D:SOURCE.ASM,M for disk or ENTER #C:,M for cassette.

### Books

I received two books for the

Atari from Little, Brown and Company (Boston, MA) which might interest you. The first is *Let's Learn BASIC—a kid's introduction to BASIC programming on ATARI home computers* by Ben Shneiderman (194 pages, softcover, \$8.95). Intended for eight through 14 year olds, adults interested in learning BASIC should find it equally helpful. The book discusses the PRINT command, the INPUT command, the FOR-NEXT loop, the IF-THEN statement and other BASIC commands in a relatively straightforward style. The random and integer functions are described, as well as strings and variable arrays. However, the Atari's graphics and sound, which the young appreciate the most, are not covered. Other versions of this book are available for IBM, Commodore 64, and Apple users.

*Home Applications and Games for the ATARI Home Computers* by Timothy P. Banse (134 pages, softcover, \$14.50) contains 31 short BASIC programs such as Checkbook Balancer, Home Inventory Log, Trip Cost Tabulator, and games such as Beowulf versus Grendel, and, of course, Ghost Town Vampire Girls. Some are useful, though others seem to be there to take up space. The book shows how each program works by explaining important lines, and listing the variables used. The author offers a disk of all the programs for \$9.95. If you lay out the \$14.50 for the book, I'd suggest spending another \$9.95 for the disk to save you the time of entering the programs.

### Using Program Perfect

Now we'll learn how to use Program Perfect, which was listed here last month. If you're new to Computer Shopper and did not get last month's issue, send me a self addressed stamped envelope for a listing of this program.

If you haven't entered last month's program yet, why not? If you have entered it, check it over a few times and make sure there are no mistakes. A mistake in a program which checks other programs is bad news!

Since last month, I've made a few minor improvements to the program, so change lines 30000, 30070, 30020, 30250 and 30260 to the following:

```
30000 CLR:CLOSE #1:CLOSE
#2:N1 = 1:N2 = N1 + N1:N84 = 84:N85 = N84 + N1:N39
= 39:N65 = 65
```

```
30070 POKE 702,64:POKE694,0:GET #N2,N:IF N = 126
AND I>N1 THEN PRINTCHR$(30);" - ";CHR$(30);:I =
I - N1:GOTO 30070
```

```
30220 POSITION N2,10:PRINTCHR$(156);LN$(5,LEN
(LN$)):PRINT :PRINT :PRINT CHR$(157);"CONT"
```

```
30250 T = NL:POSITION N2,10:INPUT #N1;LN$:FOR
I = N1 TO LEN(LN$):T = T + ASC (LN$(I,I)) 30260 IF T
650 THEN T = T - 650
```

You must make these changes for the program to be compatible with the codes we'll be entering. Note that in effect, CLR:CLOSE #1:CLOSE #2 is added to line 30000 while N676 = 676 is deleted, POKE 702,64:POKE 694,0: is added to line 30070, CHR\$(156); and a PRINT : are added to line 30220, T = NO is changed to T = NL in line 30250, and the two N676s in line 30260 are changed to 650s.

Now Program Perfect should be ready to use, and we'll first test it with a short,


four-line program. Before you do anything, though, SAVE it to cassette or diskette. Since Program Perfect erases itself from memory after it helps you

enter a program, it is important that you save it before you use it.

Following is the program we will enter with Program Perfect:

```
CTJ 10 REM TEST OF PRO-
GRAM PERFECT
LAJ 20 PRINT "THIS IS A
TEST"
WMJ 30 GOTO 20
OJZ 40 END
```

Continued on page 122



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Brønner

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Note the three letters to the left of each line number. This is the code used by Program Perfect to check the line for errors, and to determine the next line of the program for its automatic

line numbering feature.

When you RUN Program Perfect, you are asked to enter the starting line. This is the first line of the program you are entering. Since the first line of our demonstration program is ten, enter 10 for this prompt. The line below will now show

the following:

■ - - 10

The three hyphens preceding the 10 are for the three-letter code. Type the code for line 10, CTJ. The display will now show:

CTJ 10 ■

The cursor will have moved past the line number to allow you to enter the line. Type in the remainder of line ten. The display should show:

CTJ 10 REM TEST OF PROGRAM PERFECT■

Press RETURN. Program Perfect will perform a few screen manipulations below the line you have entered as it checks the line for errors and places it in the computer's memory as a real program line. You'll get a buzz with an "ERROR - TRY AGAIN" message if you've made a syntax error, or if the line does not check against the code. The line doesn't necessarily have to be in error; a mistake in the three-letter code will also trigger the error message. You'll

have to re-enter the three-letter code, but the rest of the line will remain intact so you may correct it using the cursor control keys. To erase the entire line and the code, press SHIFT-CLEAR. Program Perfect will not allow you to move the cursor out of its three-line entry area.

If the line is entered correctly, the program will automatically display the next line number of the program. Enter the codes and program lines for each line number that appears until the entire program is entered.

Program Perfect allows you to use all abbreviations, such as GR. for GRAPHICS and G. for GOTO. However, do not use ? for PRINT or vice versa as the computer treats these as two different commands. The same goes for GOTO and GOTO. Use PR. as an abbreviation for PRINT, and stick to the one-word GOTO, as this is the only form that will appear in the programs in this column.

You do not have to follow the exact spacing of the program line unless the spacing is within quotes. For example:

```
10 PRINT "HELLO":GOTO
10
```

can be entered as:

```
10 PRINT "HELLO" :
GOTO 10
```

and you won't get an error. But if you try to enter the following:

```
10 PRINT " HELLO ":
GOTO 10
```

you'll get an error message.

If you like to leave out all spaces (which, incidentally, does not save you any memory

on the Atari) you could enter:

```
10PRINT"HELLO":GOTO10
```

and it will be accepted. But be careful of lines such as:

```
10IFA = BTHENGOTO10
```

as the computer will interpret BTHENGOTO10 as a single variable and will give you an error. In this case, you must put a space after the variable:

```
10IFA = B THENGOTO10
```

This does not only apply when you are using Program Perfect, but whenever you are using Atari BASIC.

After you enter the last line of the program (which has a three-letter code ending with a "Z"), Program Perfect will print "END OF PROGRAM - STAND BY." It will then take about five seconds while it erases itself from memory and leaves you only with the lines you have entered. You can then list, save or run your program.

What if you don't enter the whole program in one sitting? You can press BREAK and SAVE what you've already typed. Since Program Perfect is in memory, you will be saving it as well as the lines of the program you have entered. When you are ready to enter more of the program, simply LOAD it back in and type GOTO 30000 (the beginning line of Program Perfect). Then enter the line number at which you left off for the "Starting number:" prompt and enter the rest of the program.

If you tried to enter the four-line sample program but couldn't, you've probably

Continued on page 126

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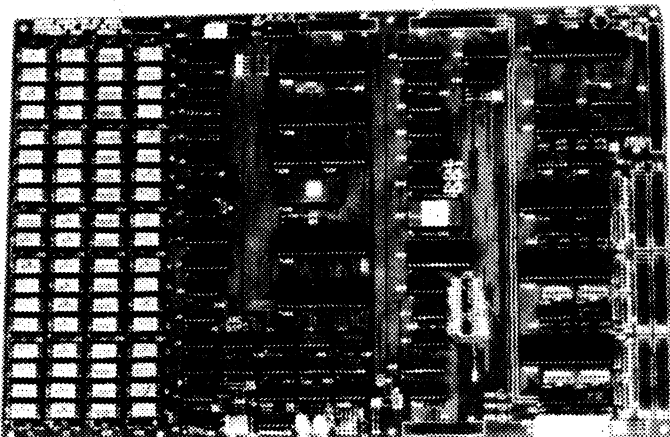
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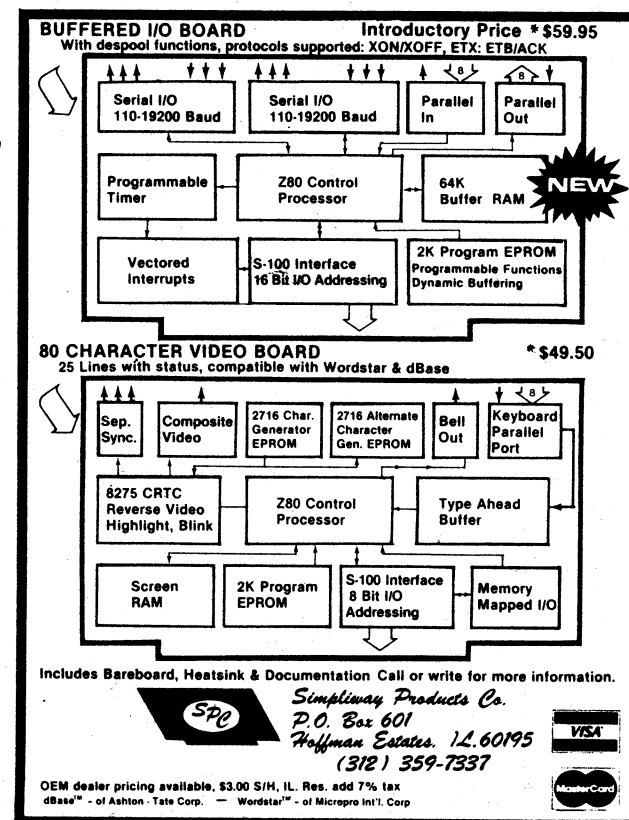
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## Brenner

## Continued from page 122

made some mistakes in entering Program Perfect. Re-check it carefully—make sure you've made all the changes that were mentioned previously. Remember to save any corrections you make to Program Perfect before you run it.

## New Year's Program

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Now, how would you like a longer program with which to test Program Perfect? Our program for the new year is one which prints banners. You can

use it to make giant "HAPPY NEW YEAR" signs if you want. It requires a printer and fan-fold paper.

Enter the banner program with Program Perfect. If you are not using Program Perfect, ignore the three letters preceding each line number when you type the program. When you RUN the program, you are asked for the height. This is the height of each letter of the banner. Since the banner's letters are printed sideways, an 80-column printer can produce letters which are 80 characters in height, so enter 80. If you have a 40-column printer, or if you

want smaller sized letters, enter a smaller number.

Next, you are asked for the length. This is the number of lines of characters which form the length of each letter. 24 is a typical value. Enter a greater or lesser number for wider or thinner letters.

Now the program asks for a character. This is the character the printer will use to form the letters of the banner. An asterisk or the letter X are good choices.

When the "ENTER MESSAGE" prompt appears, enter what you want to be printed on the banner, such as HAPPY NEW YEAR. Your

banner will be printed.

Next time, we'll learn where the banner program gets its characters from, we'll enter a test/study program for teachers and students, and more.

Readers' questions, comments

and contributions are welcome. Address all correspondence to:

Jeff Brenner's  
"Applying the Atari"  
c/o Computer Shopper  
P.O. Box F  
Titusville, FL 32781

## BANNER PROGRAM

```

EN 10 REM BANNER PROGRAM
EN 20 OPEN #1,4,0,"P":DIM A$(100),S$(20),Z$(20),C$(20),B(7),S(7),H(7)
VJ 30 CS=PEEK(756):Z$="FOR I=0 TO 7:B(1)=INT(2*1+0.5):S(1)=0:NEXT I
VJ 40 PRINT "HEIGHT (80)";:INPUT H:PRINT "LENGTH (24)";:INPUT L:H=B/L:L=8
VJ 50 PRINT "CHARACTER (X)";:INPUT S$:S$(20)=S$:S$(2)=S$
VJ 60 Z$(1)=CHR$(32):Z$(20)=CHR$(32):Z$(2)=Z$
VJ 70 Z$=Z$(1,H):S$=S$(1,H):PRINT "ENTER MESSAGE";:INPUT A$:FOR I=1 TO LEN(A$)
VJ 80 D=ASC(A$(I)):INV=0:IF D>128 THEN D=D-128:INV=1
VJ 90 IF D<32 THEN D=D+96:GOTO 110
VJ 100 IF D>96 THEN D=D-32
VJ 110 A$=(D-32)*8:FOR C=0 TO 7:S(C)=0:NEXT C:FOR B=7 TO 0 STEP -1
VJ 120 FOR T=7 TO 0 STEP -1:PK=ABS(255*INV-PEEK(T+CS+A))
VJ 130 IF PK=B(B)-S(T)>0 THEN S(T)=S(T)+B(B):H(T)=1:GOTO 150
VJ 140 H(T)=0
VJ 150 NEXT T:FOR D=1 TO L:FOR J=7 TO 0 STEP -1:IF H(J)=1 THEN PRINT A$(I);S$;
VJ 160 IF H(J)=0 THEN PRINT A$(I);Z$;
VJ 170 NEXT J:PRINT A$(I):NEXT D:NEXT B:NEXT I:RUN

```

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# The Dallas Quest

by Richard E. DeVore

Product:  
The Dallas Quest

Producer:  
DataSoft, Inc.  
9421 Winnetka Ave.  
Chatworth, CA 91311

Computer:  
Performed on Atari  
Price:  
\$39.95

For all of us who have watched the prime time show, Dallas, there is now a way to take part. No, not on television, but on your computer. DataSoft has released a graphics adventure that pits the player as a detective against good old J.R. As the player, I am trying to locate a map which shows the location of a South American oil field that is worth millions of dollars. The opening scene is the living room of the ranch at Southfork. Sue Ellen has hired me to travel to South America and find a map of an oil field that was discovered by Jock Ewing just before he died. I have to go to nine different locations on Southfork in order to obtain various clues and objects that will be needed as the story unfolds. Some will help me leave the ranch without being done in by J.R. or a giant rat. While doing this, I meet Lucy, but cannot ride off with her. Shucks! However, I do learn the location of the airfield.

Continued on  
page 127



**DeVore**  
Continued from page 126

The most difficult problem that occurs while at the ranch is killing an enormous rat that thinks I would be tasty. To avoid this it is necessary to coax an owl out of a tree. If that works, the owl will eat the rat rather than the rat eating me. What a relief to see it fly across the screen! Once the rat is no longer a problem I take the shovel. Without that, I might not find the only way to get off of Southfork.

The game has a SAVE feature which is advisable to use before you enter a dangerous situation. If you don't and are killed, you have to start over at the very beginning. Saving your journey can make the completion of the adventure less repetitive as you can load it back in and start at that point.

Leaving Southfork, I find myself on a plane headed for South America. The sound of the jet engines seem to say "hurry, hurry," but after one jump from the plane without

the benefit of a parachute, I learned to take more time.

As I travel down the jungle paths, I find that I am glad to have brought all of the items I found at the ranch. Each step seems to bring another obstacle to overcome. These include: monkeys, jaguars, anacondas, hippos (HIPPOS?), curtains, darkness, cannibals, spiders and of course J.R. It seems that he doesn't want me to find the map.

Some clues bring obvious solutions to mind, but other times the answers are learned slowly and quite often the consequences are fatal if you guess

wrong. It often takes more thought to solve most of the problems due to the unorthodox solutions. But the magic words required are simple, especially in situations when you are not sure of what to do to whom. Conquering an obstacle just adds to the excitement of anticipating the next.

One inconsistency is the fact that hippos, elephants and lions do not live in South America. However, when the cannibals "request" that you perform a "feat of courage," that fact never seems to come to mind.

The graphics and playabili-

ty are excellent. This is a game for people of all ages. It is one of the few that seem to have an appeal for the ladies as well as the men. I loaned the program

to a friend of mine to get his reaction to it, his wife and a friend spent many hours in solving it. Their daughter, who is seven, learned to play it and was quite enthralled. Playing this adventure will stretch your vocabulary as you try to find the correct synonym to unlock the mystery of each challenge. This is an adventure that the entire family can take part in solving and I highly recommend it. ●

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